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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 012424

SIPDIS

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TAGS: ASEC PGOV PTER CO

SUBJECT: A/S TAYLOR MEETING WITH MOD URIBE

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) December 1, 2004, 3:00-4:00 p.m., Ministry of Defense,  
Bogota

12. (U) Participants:

U.S.  
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A/S Francis X. Taylor  
Col. Simeon Trombitas, Milgroup Commander  
Col. William Graves, Defense Attaché  
Mark Hunter, RSO  
Pamela Fierst, Special Assistant  
Dana Brown, notetaker

Colombia  
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Jorge Alberto Uribe Echavarria, Minister of Defense  
Jorge Eastman, Vice Minister

13. (C) Summary: A/S Taylor congratulated Minister of Defense (MOD) Jorge Uribe on the significant improvements since his last visit in 2002 as A/S for Counterterrorism Affairs. Noting the reductions in the numbers of kidnappings, homicides, and oil pipeline attacks, Uribe vowed to "stay the course." He added that Colombia had begun to offer other nations consultation assistance on combating terrorist attacks on oil pipelines, securing ports, and conducting counternarcotics operations. End Summary.

Bilateral Assistance Reinforces Security Efforts  
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14. (C) Taylor praised Uribe on the success of the GOC's security programs, especially its anti-kidnapping efforts. His trip to the program training site only confirmed to him that Colombia had a well-established means of combating kidnappers. He applauded the fact that crime had been on a downward trend over the last two years. Uribe responded by stressing that bilateral assistance had been key to providing the resources necessary to establish Colombia's security programs. He was satisfied that his Administration was on the correct path and promised to continue.

15. (C) Taylor noted that his visit to Cartagena had given him the opportunity to see the civilian/police cooperation that helps protect the city. He added that President Bush had asked for a re-evaluation of the city's risk levels after his November 22 visit. In response to Vice Minister Eastman's question about the future of the anti-kidnapping program, Taylor confirmed the USG's intention to continue supporting it.

CO Shares Expertise with Neighbors  
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16. (C) Uribe stressed that Colombia's expertise in addressing major security challenges recently had led to Colombia advising other countries. For example, GOC officials had advised Haitians and Brazilians on ways to improve port security, and he mentioned plans to work with Afghans on planning counternarcotics missions in 2005. Taylor commented that Colombia's experience in protecting oil pipelines from terrorist attacks would likely be useful in Iraq and Central Asia.

WOOD